AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

a processor for performing image processing on original image data to obtain processed image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed by using multiple bits,

wherein the processor embeds bits obtained by dividing plural bits of data, which describe information ~~different from information representing said processed image data~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data, in a part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data ~~placed~~ dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image data.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said processed image data.

4. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when said image processing is performed on original image data to obtain said processed image data.

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information ~~different from information for describing said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when said bits are ~~placed~~ dispersed.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

obtaining ~~first~~ processed image data by performing image processing on original image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed by using multiple bits; and

~~placing~~ embedding bits, which describe information ~~different from information representing said first processed image data~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data, and are obtained by dividing plural bits of data, in a part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said ~~first~~ processed image data ~~placed~~ dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information ~~different from information of said first processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said ~~first~~ processed image data.

9. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when the ~~first~~ processed image data is obtained.

10. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when bits for describing information different from information of said ~~first~~ processed image data are ~~placed~~ dispersed.

11. (Currently Amended) A recording medium in which a program for a computer is stored, wherein said program is one that enables the computer to perform the following processing:

image processing on original image data to obtain processed image data, the original image data and the processed image date being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed by using multiple bits, wherein bits, which describe information ~~different from information representing said processed~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data, and are ~~placed in~~ obtained by dividing plural bits of data, are embedded in a

part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said processed image data.

14. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when said image processing is performed on original image data to obtain said processed image data.

15. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information ~~different from information of said processed image data is information describing~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data describes a time when said bits are ~~placed~~ dispersed.

16-20 (canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

obtaining processed image data by performing image processing on original image data, the original image data and the processed image date being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed using multiple bits; and

~~placing~~ embedding bits, obtained by dividing plural bits of data, for describing information ~~different from information representing the processed image data in~~ relating to the image processing performed on said original image data, in a part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data ~~placed~~ dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image data, each of the ~~predetermined~~ pixels of said processed image dispersed at the predetermined positions being separated by at least one pixel from the rest of the predetermined pixels.

22. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are ~~placed~~ embedded is decided in accordance with a predetermined procedure irrespective of pixel data.

23. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are ~~placed~~ embedded is predetermined fixed positions irrespective of pixel data.

24. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are ~~placed~~ embedded is a predetermined position.

25. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data is the least significant bit of each of the pixels of said processed image data.

26. (New) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein the part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data is the least significant bit of each of the pixels of said processed image data.

27. (New) A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein the part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data is the least significant bit of each of the pixels of said processed image data.

28. (New) An image processing method according to claim 21, wherein the part of the multiple bits expressing each of the pixels of said processed image data is the least significant bit of each of the pixels of said processed image data.